

Assembly Bill No. 595

CHAPTER 246

An act to amend Section 1522 of the Health and Safety Code, and to amend Section 361.4 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to children, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

[Approved by Governor October 11, 2009. Filed with
Secretary of State October 11, 2009.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 595, Adams. Placement of children: criminal background checks.

(1) Existing law, the California Community Care Facilities Act, provides for the licensure and regulation of community care facilities, including foster family homes and foster family agencies, by the State Department of Social Services. Violation of these provisions is a misdemeanor.

Existing law requires a criminal record check of applicants for a license, special permit, or certificate of approval for a foster family home or certified family home, and other persons, including nonclients who reside in those homes and staff and employees. Existing law requires that an application be denied, unless the Director of Social Services grants an exemption, if it is found that the applicant or any of the other designated persons has been convicted of prescribed crimes.

This bill would prohibit the State Department of Social Services or other approving authority from issuing a license or certificate of approval to any foster family home or certified family home applicant who has not obtained both a California and Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal record clearance or an exemption from disqualification, as prescribed.

This bill would, to the same extent required for federal funding, effective October 1, 2008, prohibit the director from granting an exemption where a foster care provider applicant or any of the other designated persons have been convicted of certain felonies at any time and other felonies in the previous 5 years. This bill would prohibit exemptions under these circumstances for foster care providers, as specified, in those homes where the individual has been convicted of murder or voluntary manslaughter.

(2) Existing law sets forth circumstances under which a minor may be adjudged a dependent child of the juvenile court, and establishes procedures to determine the temporary placement of a dependent child.

Existing law requires a county social worker to visit the home of a relative or prospective guardian who is not a licensed or certified foster parent, prior to placing the child in that home, to ascertain the appropriateness of the placement. Existing law also requires the court or county social worker to initiate a state and federal criminal records check through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System as part of their assessment.

Existing law provides that these provisions shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2010, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that is enacted before January 1, 2010, deletes or extends that date.

This bill would prohibit placement of the child in the home of a person if the criminal records check indicates the person has been convicted of a crime that the Director of Social Services cannot grant an exemption for with respect to foster family home and certified family home applicants.

This bill would also prohibit placement of a child in the home of a person who has been convicted of a crime that the Director of Social Services may grant an exemption for unless a criminal records exemption has been granted by the county, based on substantial and convincing evidence, to support a reasonable belief that the person with the criminal conviction is of such good character as to justify the placement and not present a risk of harm to the child.

This bill would repeal the provisions relating to the sunset and repeal of these existing law provisions.

To the extent this bill would impose additional duties on county welfare departments, this bill would create a state-mandated local program.

(3) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

(4) This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 1522 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

1522. The Legislature recognizes the need to generate timely and accurate positive fingerprint identification of applicants as a condition of issuing licenses, permits, or certificates of approval for persons to operate or provide direct care services in a community care facility, foster family home, or a certified family home of a licensed foster family agency. Therefore, the Legislature supports the use of the fingerprint live-scan technology, as identified in the long-range plan of the Department of Justice for fully automating the processing of fingerprints and other data by the year 1999, otherwise known as the California Crime Information Intelligence System (CAL-CII), to be used for applicant fingerprints. It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this section to require the fingerprints of those individuals whose contact with community care clients may pose a risk to the clients' health and safety. An individual shall be required to obtain either a criminal record clearance or a criminal record exemption from the State

Department of Social Services before his or her initial presence in a community care facility.

(a) (1) Before issuing a license or special permit to any person or persons to operate or manage a community care facility, the State Department of Social Services shall secure from an appropriate law enforcement agency a criminal record to determine whether the applicant or any other person specified in subdivision (b) has ever been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation or arrested for any crime specified in Section 290 of the Penal Code, for violating Section 245 or 273.5, of the Penal Code, subdivision (b) of Section 273a of the Penal Code, or, prior to January 1, 1994, paragraph (2) of Section 273a of the Penal Code, or for any crime for which the department cannot grant an exemption if the person was convicted and the person has not been exonerated.

(2) The criminal history information shall include the full criminal record, if any, of those persons, and subsequent arrest information pursuant to Section 11105.2 of the Penal Code.

(3) Except during the 2003–04 to the 2009–10 fiscal years, inclusive, neither the Department of Justice nor the State Department of Social Services may charge a fee for the fingerprinting of an applicant for a license or special permit to operate a facility providing nonmedical board, room, and care for six or less children or for obtaining a criminal record of the applicant pursuant to this section.

(4) The following shall apply to the criminal record information:

(A) If the State Department of Social Services finds that the applicant, or any other person specified in subdivision (b), has been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation, the application shall be denied, unless the director grants an exemption pursuant to subdivision (g).

(B) If the State Department of Social Services finds that the applicant, or any other person specified in subdivision (b) is awaiting trial for a crime other than a minor traffic violation, the State Department of Social Services may cease processing the application until the conclusion of the trial.

(C) If no criminal record information has been recorded, the Department of Justice shall provide the applicant and the State Department of Social Services with a statement of that fact.

(D) If the State Department of Social Services finds after licensure that the licensee, or any other person specified in paragraph (1) of subdivision (b), has been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation, the license may be revoked, unless the director grants an exemption pursuant to subdivision (g).

(E) An applicant and any other person specified in subdivision (b) shall submit fingerprint images and related information to the Department of Justice for the purpose of searching the criminal records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in addition to the criminal records search required by this subdivision. If an applicant and all other persons described in subdivision (b) meet all of the conditions for licensure, except receipt of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's criminal offender record information search response for the applicant or any of the persons described in

subdivision (b), the department may issue a license if the applicant and each person described in subdivision (b) has signed and submitted a statement that he or she has never been convicted of a crime in the United States, other than a traffic infraction, as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 42001 of the Vehicle Code. If, after licensure, the department determines that the licensee or any other person specified in subdivision (b) has a criminal record, the license may be revoked pursuant to Section 1550. The department may also suspend the license pending an administrative hearing pursuant to Section 1550.5.

(F) The State Department of Social Services shall develop procedures to provide the individual's state and federal criminal history information with the written notification of his or her exemption denial or revocation based on the criminal record. Receipt of the criminal history information shall be optional on the part of the individual, as set forth in the agency's procedures. The procedure shall protect the confidentiality and privacy of the individual's record, and the criminal history information shall not be made available to the employer.

(G) Notwithstanding any other law, the department is authorized to provide an individual with a copy of his or her state or federal level criminal offender record information search response as provided to that department by the Department of Justice if the department has denied a criminal background clearance based on this information and the individual makes a written request to the department for a copy specifying an address to which it is to be sent. The state or federal level criminal offender record information search response shall not be modified or altered from its form or content as provided by the Department of Justice and shall be provided to the address specified by the individual in his or her written request. The department shall retain a copy of the individual's written request and the response and date provided.

(b) (1) In addition to the applicant, this section shall be applicable to criminal convictions of the following persons:

(A) Adults responsible for administration or direct supervision of staff.

(B) Any person, other than a client, residing in the facility.

(C) Any person who provides client assistance in dressing, grooming, bathing, or personal hygiene. Any nurse assistant or home health aide meeting the requirements of Section 1338.5 or 1736.6, respectively, who is not employed, retained, or contracted by the licensee, and who has been certified or recertified on or after July 1, 1998, shall be deemed to meet the criminal record clearance requirements of this section. A certified nurse assistant and certified home health aide who will be providing client assistance and who falls under this exemption shall provide one copy of his or her current certification, prior to providing care, to the community care facility. The facility shall maintain the copy of the certification on file as long as care is being provided by the certified nurse assistant or certified home health aide at the facility. Nothing in this paragraph restricts the right of the department to exclude a certified nurse assistant or certified home

health aide from a licensed community care facility pursuant to Section 1558.

(D) Any staff person, volunteer, or employee who has contact with the clients.

(E) If the applicant is a firm, partnership, association, or corporation, the chief executive officer or other person serving in like capacity.

(F) Additional officers of the governing body of the applicant, or other persons with a financial interest in the applicant, as determined necessary by the department by regulation. The criteria used in the development of these regulations shall be based on the person's capability to exercise substantial influence over the operation of the facility.

(2) The following persons are exempt from the requirements applicable under paragraph (1):

(A) A medical professional as defined in department regulations who holds a valid license or certification from the person's governing California medical care regulatory entity and who is not employed, retained, or contracted by the licensee if all of the following apply:

(i) The criminal record of the person has been cleared as a condition of licensure or certification by the person's governing California medical care regulatory entity.

(ii) The person is providing time-limited specialized clinical care or services.

(iii) The person is providing care or services within the person's scope of practice.

(iv) The person is not a community care facility licensee or an employee of the facility.

(B) A third-party repair person or similar retained contractor if all of the following apply:

(i) The person is hired for a defined, time-limited job.

(ii) The person is not left alone with clients.

(iii) When clients are present in the room in which the repair person or contractor is working, a staff person who has a criminal record clearance or exemption is also present.

(C) Employees of a licensed home health agency and other members of licensed hospice interdisciplinary teams who have a contract with a client or resident of the facility and are in the facility at the request of that client or resident's legal decisionmaker. The exemption does not apply to a person who is a community care facility licensee or an employee of the facility.

(D) Clergy and other spiritual caregivers who are performing services in common areas of the community care facility or who are advising an individual client at the request of, or with the permission of, the client or legal decisionmaker, are exempt from fingerprint and criminal background check requirements imposed by community care licensing. This exemption does not apply to a person who is a community care licensee or employee of the facility.

(E) Members of fraternal, service, or similar organizations who conduct group activities for clients if all of the following apply:

- (i) Members are not left alone with clients.
- (ii) Members do not transport clients off the facility premises.
- (iii) The same organization does not conduct group activities for clients more often than defined by the department's regulations.

(3) In addition to the exemptions in paragraph (2), the following persons in foster family homes, certified family homes, and small family homes are exempt from the requirements applicable under paragraph (1):

(A) Adult friends and family of the licensed or certified foster parent, who come into the home to visit for a length of time no longer than defined by the department in regulations, provided that the adult friends and family of the licensee are not left alone with the foster children. However, the licensee, acting as a reasonable and prudent parent, as defined in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 362.04 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, may allow his or her adult friends and family to provide short-term care to the foster child and act as an appropriate occasional short-term babysitter for the child.

(B) Parents of a foster child's friend when the foster child is visiting the friend's home and the friend, licensed or certified foster parent, or both are also present. However, the licensee, acting as a reasonable and prudent parent, may allow the parent of the foster child's friend to act as an appropriate short-term babysitter for the child without the friend being present.

(C) Individuals who are engaged by any licensed or certified foster parent to provide short-term care to the child for periods not to exceed 24 hours. Caregivers shall use a reasonable and prudent parent standard in selecting appropriate individuals to act as appropriate occasional short-term babysitters.

(4) In addition to the exemptions specified in paragraph (2), the following persons in adult day care and adult day support centers are exempt from the requirements applicable under paragraph (1):

(A) Unless contraindicated by the client's individualized program plan (IPP) or needs and service plan, a spouse, significant other, relative, or close friend of a client, or an attendant or a facilitator for a client with a developmental disability if the attendant or facilitator is not employed, retained, or contracted by the licensee. This exemption applies only if the person is visiting the client or providing direct care and supervision to the client.

(B) A volunteer if all of the following applies:

- (i) The volunteer is supervised by the licensee or a facility employee with a criminal record clearance or exemption.
- (ii) The volunteer is never left alone with clients.
- (iii) The volunteer does not provide any client assistance with dressing, grooming, bathing, or personal hygiene other than washing of hands.

(5) (A) In addition to the exemptions specified in paragraph (2), the following persons in adult residential and social rehabilitation facilities, unless contraindicated by the client's individualized program plan (IPP) or needs and services plan, are exempt from the requirements applicable under

paragraph (1): a spouse, significant other, relative, or close friend of a client, or an attendant or a facilitator for a client with a developmental disability if the attendant or facilitator is not employed, retained, or contracted by the licensee. This exemption applies only if the person is visiting the client or providing direct care and supervision to that client.

(B) Nothing in this subdivision shall prevent a licensee from requiring a criminal record clearance of any individual exempt from the requirements of this section, provided that the individual has client contact.

(6) Any person similar to those described in this subdivision, as defined by the department in regulations.

(c) (1) Subsequent to initial licensure, a person specified in subdivision (b) who is not exempted from fingerprinting shall obtain either a criminal record clearance or an exemption from disqualification pursuant to subdivision (g) from the State Department of Social Services prior to employment, residence, or initial presence in the facility. A person specified in subdivision (b) who is not exempt from fingerprinting shall be fingerprinted and shall sign a declaration under penalty of perjury regarding any prior criminal convictions. The licensee shall submit fingerprint images and related information to the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, through the Department of Justice, for a state and federal level criminal offender record information search, or comply with paragraph (1) of subdivision (h). These fingerprint images and related information shall be sent by electronic transmission in a manner approved by the State Department of Social Services and the Department of Justice for the purpose of obtaining a permanent set of fingerprints, and shall be submitted to the Department of Justice by the licensee. A licensee's failure to prohibit the employment, residence, or initial presence of a person specified in subdivision (b) who is not exempt from fingerprinting and who has not received either a criminal record clearance or an exemption from disqualification pursuant to subdivision (g) or to comply with paragraph (1) of subdivision (h), as required in this section, shall result in the citation of a deficiency and the immediate assessment of civil penalties in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) per violation per day for a maximum of five days, unless the violation is a second or subsequent violation within a 12-month period in which case the civil penalties shall be in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) per violation for a maximum of 30 days, and shall be grounds for disciplining the licensee pursuant to Section 1550. The department may assess civil penalties for continued violations as permitted by Section 1548. The fingerprint images and related information shall then be submitted to the Department of Justice for processing. Upon request of the licensee, who shall enclose a self-addressed stamped postcard for this purpose, the Department of Justice shall verify receipt of the fingerprints.

(2) Within 14 calendar days of the receipt of the fingerprint images, the Department of Justice shall notify the State Department of Social Services of the criminal record information, as provided for in subdivision (a). If no criminal record information has been recorded, the Department of Justice shall provide the licensee and the State Department of Social Services with

a statement of that fact within 14 calendar days of receipt of the fingerprint images. Documentation of the individual's clearance or exemption from disqualification shall be maintained by the licensee and be available for inspection. If new fingerprint images are required for processing, the Department of Justice shall, within 14 calendar days from the date of receipt of the fingerprints, notify the licensee that the fingerprints were illegible, the Department of Justice shall notify the State Department of Social Services, as required by Section 1522.04, and shall also notify the licensee by mail, within 14 days of electronic transmission of the fingerprints to the Department of Justice, if the person has no criminal history recorded. A violation of the regulations adopted pursuant to Section 1522.04 shall result in the citation of a deficiency and an immediate assessment of civil penalties in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) per violation per day for a maximum of five days, unless the violation is a second or subsequent violation within a 12-month period in which case the civil penalties shall be in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) per violation for a maximum of 30 days, and shall be grounds for disciplining the licensee pursuant to Section 1550. The department may assess civil penalties for continued violations as permitted by Section 1548.

(3) Except for persons specified in subdivision (b) who are exempt from fingerprinting, the licensee shall endeavor to ascertain the previous employment history of persons required to be fingerprinted. If it is determined by the State Department of Social Services, on the basis of the fingerprint images and related information submitted to the Department of Justice, that subsequent to obtaining a criminal record clearance or exemption from disqualification pursuant to subdivision (g), the person has been convicted of, or is awaiting trial for, a sex offense against a minor, or has been convicted for an offense specified in Section 243.4, 273a, 273d, 273g, or 368 of the Penal Code, or a felony, the State Department of Social Services shall notify the licensee to act immediately to terminate the person's employment, remove the person from the community care facility, or bar the person from entering the community care facility. The State Department of Social Services may subsequently grant an exemption from disqualification pursuant to subdivision (g). If the conviction or arrest was for another crime, except a minor traffic violation, the licensee shall, upon notification by the State Department of Social Services, act immediately to either (A) terminate the person's employment, remove the person from the community care facility, or bar the person from entering the community care facility; or (B) seek an exemption from disqualification pursuant to subdivision (g). The State Department of Social Services shall determine if the person shall be allowed to remain in the facility until a decision on the exemption from disqualification is rendered. A licensee's failure to comply with the department's prohibition of employment, contact with clients, or presence in the facility as required by this paragraph shall result in a citation of deficiency and an immediate assessment of civil penalties in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) per violation per day and shall be grounds for disciplining the licensee pursuant to Section 1550.

(4) The department may issue an exemption from disqualification on its own motion pursuant to subdivision (g) if the person's criminal history indicates that the person is of good character based on the age, seriousness, and frequency of the conviction or convictions. The department, in consultation with interested parties, shall develop regulations to establish the criteria to grant an exemption from disqualification pursuant to this paragraph.

(5) Concurrently with notifying the licensee pursuant to paragraph (3), the department shall notify the affected individual of his or her right to seek an exemption from disqualification pursuant to subdivision (g). The individual may seek an exemption from disqualification only if the licensee terminates the person's employment or removes the person from the facility after receiving notice from the department pursuant to paragraph (3).

(d) (1) Before issuing a license or certificate of approval to any person or persons to operate a foster family home or certified family home as described in Section 1506, the State Department of Social Services or other approving authority shall secure California and Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal history information to determine whether the applicant or any person specified in subdivision (b) who is not exempt from fingerprinting has ever been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation or arrested for any crime specified in subdivision (c) of Section 290 of the Penal Code, for violating Section 245 or 273.5, subdivision (b) of Section 273a or, prior to January 1, 1994, paragraph (2) of Section 273a of the Penal Code, or for any crime for which the department cannot grant an exemption if the person was convicted and the person has not been exonerated. The State Department of Social Services or other approving authority shall not issue a license or certificate of approval to any foster family home or certified family home applicant who has not obtained both a California and Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal record clearance or exemption from disqualification pursuant to subdivision (g).

(2) The criminal history information shall include the full criminal record, if any, of those persons.

(3) Neither the Department of Justice nor the State Department of Social Services may charge a fee for the fingerprinting of an applicant for a license, special permit, or certificate of approval described in this subdivision. The record, if any, shall be taken into consideration when evaluating a prospective applicant.

(4) The following shall apply to the criminal record information:

(A) If the applicant or other persons specified in subdivision (b) who are not exempt from fingerprinting have convictions that would make the applicant's home unfit as a foster family home or a certified family home, the license, special permit, or certificate of approval shall be denied.

(B) If the State Department of Social Services finds that the applicant, or any person specified in subdivision (b) who is not exempt from fingerprinting is awaiting trial for a crime other than a minor traffic violation, the State Department of Social Services or other approving authority may cease processing the application until the conclusion of the trial.

(C) For purposes of this subdivision, a criminal record clearance provided under Section 8712 of the Family Code may be used by the department or other approving agency.

(D) To the same extent required for federal funding, an applicant for a foster family home license or for certification as a family home, and any other person specified in subdivision (b) who is not exempt from fingerprinting, shall submit a set of fingerprint images and related information to the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, through the Department of Justice, for a state and federal level criminal offender record information search, in addition to the criminal records search required by subdivision (a).

(5) Any person specified in this subdivision shall, as a part of the application, be fingerprinted and sign a declaration under penalty of perjury regarding any prior criminal convictions or arrests for any crime against a child, spousal or cohabitant abuse or, any crime for which the department cannot grant an exemption if the person was convicted and shall submit these fingerprints to the licensing agency or other approving authority.

(6) (A) Subsequent to initial licensure or certification, a person specified in subdivision (b) who is not exempt from fingerprinting shall obtain both a California and Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal record clearance, or an exemption from disqualification pursuant to subdivision (g), prior to employment, residence, or initial presence in the foster family or certified family home. A foster family home licensee or foster family agency shall submit fingerprint images and related information of persons specified in subdivision (b) who are not exempt from fingerprinting to the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, through the Department of Justice, for a state and federal level criminal offender record information search, or to comply with paragraph (1) of subdivision (h). A foster family home licensee's or a foster family agency's failure to either prohibit the employment, residence, or initial presence of a person specified in subdivision (b) who is not exempt from fingerprinting and who has not received either a criminal record clearance or an exemption from disqualification pursuant to subdivision (g), or comply with paragraph (1) of subdivision (h), as required in this section, shall result in a citation of a deficiency, and the immediate civil penalties of one hundred dollars (\$100) per violation per day for a maximum of five days, unless the violation is a second or subsequent violation within a 12-month period in which case the civil penalties shall be in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) per violation for a maximum of 30 days, and shall be grounds for disciplining the licensee pursuant to Section 1550. A violation of the regulation adopted pursuant to Section 1522.04 shall result in the citation of a deficiency and an immediate assessment of civil penalties in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) per violation per day for a maximum of five days, unless the violation is a second or subsequent violation within a 12-month period in which case the civil penalties shall be in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) per violation for a maximum of 30 days, and shall be grounds for disciplining the foster family home licensee or the foster family agency

pursuant to Section 1550. The State Department of Social Services may assess penalties for continued violations, as permitted by Section 1548. The fingerprint images shall then be submitted to the Department of Justice for processing.

(B) Upon request of the licensee, who shall enclose a self-addressed envelope for this purpose, the Department of Justice shall verify receipt of the fingerprints. Within five working days of the receipt of the criminal record or information regarding criminal convictions from the Department of Justice, the department shall notify the applicant of any criminal arrests or convictions. If no arrests or convictions are recorded, the Department of Justice shall provide the foster family home licensee or the foster family agency with a statement of that fact concurrent with providing the information to the State Department of Social Services.

(7) If the State Department of Social Services finds that the applicant, or any other person specified in subdivision (b) who is not exempt from fingerprinting, has been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation, the application shall be denied, unless the director grants an exemption from disqualification pursuant to subdivision (g).

(8) If the State Department of Social Services finds after licensure or the granting of the certificate of approval that the licensee, certified foster parent, or any other person specified in subdivision (b) who is not exempt from fingerprinting, has been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation, the license or certificate of approval may be revoked by the department or the foster family agency, whichever is applicable, unless the director grants an exemption from disqualification pursuant to subdivision (g). A licensee's failure to comply with the department's prohibition of employment, contact with clients, or presence in the facility as required by paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) shall be grounds for disciplining the licensee pursuant to Section 1550.

(e) The State Department of Social Services shall not use a record of arrest to deny, revoke, or terminate any application, license, employment, or residence unless the department investigates the incident and secures evidence, whether or not related to the incident of arrest, that is admissible in an administrative hearing to establish conduct by the person that may pose a risk to the health and safety of any person who is or may become a client. The State Department of Social Services is authorized to obtain any arrest or conviction records or reports from any law enforcement agency as necessary to the performance of its duties to inspect, license, and investigate community care facilities and individuals associated with a community care facility.

(f) (1) For purposes of this section or any other provision of this chapter, a conviction means a plea or verdict of guilty or a conviction following a plea of nolo contendere. Any action that the State Department of Social Services is permitted to take following the establishment of a conviction may be taken when the time for appeal has elapsed, when the judgment of conviction has been affirmed on appeal, or when an order granting probation is made suspending the imposition of sentence, notwithstanding a subsequent

order pursuant to Sections 1203.4 and 1203.4a of the Penal Code permitting the person to withdraw his or her plea of guilty and to enter a plea of not guilty, or setting aside the verdict of guilty, or dismissing the accusation, information, or indictment. For purposes of this section or any other provision of this chapter, the record of a conviction, or a copy thereof certified by the clerk of the court or by a judge of the court in which the conviction occurred, shall be conclusive evidence of the conviction. For purposes of this section or any other provision of this chapter, the arrest disposition report certified by the Department of Justice, or documents admissible in a criminal action pursuant to Section 969b of the Penal Code, shall be prima facie evidence of the conviction, notwithstanding any other law prohibiting the admission of these documents in a civil or administrative action.

(2) For purposes of this section or any other provision of this chapter, the department shall consider criminal convictions from another state or federal court as if the criminal offense was committed in this state.

(g) (1) After review of the record, the director may grant an exemption from disqualification for a license or special permit as specified in paragraph (4) of subdivision (a), or for a license, special permit, or certificate of approval as specified in paragraphs (4), (7), and (8) of subdivision (d), or for employment, residence, or presence in a community care facility as specified in paragraphs (3), (4), and (5) of subdivision (c), if the director has substantial and convincing evidence to support a reasonable belief that the applicant and the person convicted of the crime, if other than the applicant, are of good character as to justify issuance of the license or special permit or granting an exemption for purposes of subdivision (c). Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, an exemption shall not be granted pursuant to this subdivision if the conviction was for any of the following offenses:

(A) (i) An offense specified in Section 220, 243.4, or 264.1, subdivision (a) of Section 273a or, prior to January 1, 1994, paragraph (1) of Section 273a, Section 273d, 288, or 289, subdivision (c) of Section 290, or Section 368 of the Penal Code, or was a conviction of another crime against an individual specified in subdivision (c) of Section 667.5 of the Penal Code.

(ii) Notwithstanding clause (i), the director may grant an exemption regarding the conviction for an offense described in paragraph (1), (2), (7), or (8) of subdivision (c) of Section 667.5 of the Penal Code, if the employee or prospective employee has been rehabilitated as provided in Section 4852.03 of the Penal Code, has maintained the conduct required in Section 4852.05 of the Penal Code for at least 10 years, and has the recommendation of the district attorney representing the employee's county of residence, or if the employee or prospective employee has received a certificate of rehabilitation pursuant to Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 4852.01) of Title 6 of Part 3 of the Penal Code. This clause shall not apply to foster care providers, including relative caregivers, nonrelated extended family members, or any other person specified in subdivision (b), in those homes

where the individual has been convicted of an offense described in paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 667.5 of the Penal Code.

(B) A felony offense specified in Section 729 of the Business and Professions Code or Section 206 or 215, subdivision (a) of Section 347, subdivision (b) of Section 417, or subdivision (a) of Section 451 of the Penal Code.

(C) Under no circumstances shall an exemption be granted pursuant to this subdivision to any foster care provider applicant if that applicant, or any other person specified in subdivision (b) in those homes, has a felony conviction for either of the following offenses:

(i) A felony conviction for child abuse or neglect, spousal abuse, crimes against a child, including child pornography, or for a crime involving violence, including rape, sexual assault, or homicide, but not including other physical assault and battery. For purposes of this subparagraph, a crime involving violence means a violent crime specified in clause (i) of subparagraph (A), or subparagraph (B).

(ii) A felony conviction, within the last five years, for physical assault, battery, or a drug- or alcohol-related offense.

(iii) This subparagraph shall not apply to licenses or approvals wherein a caregiver was granted an exemption to a criminal conviction described in clause (i) or (ii) prior to the enactment of this subparagraph.

(iv) This subparagraph shall remain operative only to the extent that compliance with its provisions is required by federal law as a condition for receiving funding under Title IV-E of the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 670 et seq.).

(2) The department shall not prohibit a person from being employed or having contact with clients in a facility on the basis of a denied criminal record exemption request or arrest information unless the department complies with the requirements of Section 1558.

(h) (1) For purposes of compliance with this section, the department may permit an individual to transfer a current criminal record clearance, as defined in subdivision (a), from one facility to another, as long as the criminal record clearance has been processed through a state licensing district office, and is being transferred to another facility licensed by a state licensing district office. The request shall be in writing to the State Department of Social Services, and shall include a copy of the person's driver's license or valid identification card issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles, or a valid photo identification issued by another state or the United States government if the person is not a California resident. Upon request of the licensee, who shall enclose a self-addressed envelope for this purpose, the State Department of Social Services shall verify whether the individual has a clearance that can be transferred.

(2) The State Department of Social Services shall hold criminal record clearances in its active files for a minimum of three years after an employee is no longer employed at a licensed facility in order for the criminal record clearance to be transferred.

(3) The following shall apply to a criminal record clearance or exemption from the department or a county office with department-delegated licensing authority:

(A) A county office with department-delegated licensing authority may accept a clearance or exemption from the department.

(B) The department may accept a clearance or exemption from any county office with department-delegated licensing authority.

(C) A county office with department-delegated licensing authority may accept a clearance or exemption from any other county office with department-delegated licensing authority.

(4) With respect to notifications issued by the Department of Justice pursuant to Section 11105.2 of the Penal Code concerning an individual whose criminal record clearance was originally processed by the department or a county office with department-delegated licensing authority, all of the following shall apply:

(A) The Department of Justice shall process a request from the department or a county office with department-delegated licensing authority to receive the notice only if all of the following conditions are met:

(i) The request shall be submitted to the Department of Justice by the agency to be substituted to receive the notification.

(ii) The request shall be for the same applicant type as the type for which the original clearance was obtained.

(iii) The request shall contain all prescribed data elements and format protocols pursuant to a written agreement between the department and the Department of Justice.

(B) (i) On or before January 7, 2005, the department shall notify the Department of Justice of all county offices that have department-delegated licensing authority.

(ii) The department shall notify the Department of Justice within 15 calendar days of the date on which a new county office receives department-delegated licensing authority or a county's delegated licensing authority is rescinded.

(C) The Department of Justice shall charge the department, a county office with department-delegated licensing authority, or a county child welfare agency with criminal record clearance and exemption authority, a fee for each time a request to substitute the recipient agency is received for purposes of this paragraph. This fee shall not exceed the cost of providing the service.

(5) (A) A county child welfare agency with authority to secure clearances pursuant to Section 16504.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code and to grant exemptions pursuant to Section 361.4 of the Welfare and Institutions Code may accept a clearance or exemption from another county with criminal record and exemption authority pursuant to these sections.

(B) With respect to notifications issued by the Department of Justice pursuant to Section 11105.2 of the Penal Code concerning an individual whose criminal record clearance was originally processed by a county child welfare agency with criminal record clearance and exemption authority, the

Department of Justice shall process a request from a county child welfare agency with criminal record and exemption authority to receive the notice only if all of the following conditions are met:

(i) The request shall be submitted to the Department of Justice by the agency to be substituted to receive the notification.

(ii) The request shall be for the same applicant type as the type for which the original clearance was obtained.

(iii) The request shall contain all prescribed data elements and format protocols pursuant to a written agreement between the State Department of Social Services and the Department of Justice.

(i) The full criminal record obtained for purposes of this section may be used by the department or by a licensed adoption agency as a clearance required for adoption purposes.

(j) If a licensee or facility is required by law to deny employment or to terminate employment of any employee based on written notification from the state department that the employee has a prior criminal conviction or is determined unsuitable for employment under Section 1558, the licensee or facility shall not incur civil liability or unemployment insurance liability as a result of that denial or termination.

(k) The State Department of Social Services may charge a fee for the costs of processing electronic fingerprint images and related information.

(l) Amendments to this section made in the 1999 portion of the 1999–2000 Regular Session shall be implemented commencing 60 days after the effective date of the act amending this section in the 1999 portion of the 1999–2000 Regular Session, except that those provisions for the submission of fingerprints for searching the records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation shall be implemented 90 days after the effective date of that act.

SEC. 2. Section 361.4 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

361.4. (a) Prior to placing a child in the home of a relative, or the home of any prospective guardian or other person who is not a licensed or certified foster parent, the county social worker shall visit the home to ascertain the appropriateness of the placement.

(b) Whenever a child may be placed in the home of a relative, or the home of any prospective guardian or other person who is not a licensed or certified foster parent, the court or county social worker placing the child shall cause a state-level criminal records check to be conducted by an appropriate government agency through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) pursuant to Section 16504.5. The criminal records check shall be conducted with regard to all persons over 18 years of age living in the home, and on any other person over 18 years of age, other than professionals providing professional services to the child, known to the placing entity who may have significant contact with the child, including any person who has a familial or intimate relationship with any person living in the home. A criminal records check may be conducted pursuant to this section on any person over 14 years of age living in the

home who the county social worker believes may have a criminal record. Within 10 calendar days following the criminal records check conducted through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System, the social worker shall ensure that a fingerprint clearance check of the relative and any other person whose criminal record was obtained pursuant to this subdivision is initiated through the Department of Justice to ensure the accuracy of the criminal records check conducted through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System and shall review the results of any criminal records check to assess the safety of the home. The Department of Justice shall forward fingerprint requests for federal-level criminal history information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation pursuant to this section.

(c) Whenever a child may be placed in the home of a relative, or a prospective guardian or other person who is not a licensed or certified foster parent, the county social worker shall cause a check of the Child Abuse Central Index pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 11170 of the Penal Code to be requested from the Department of Justice. The Child Abuse Central Index check shall be conducted on all persons over 18 years of age living in the home. For any application received on or after January 1, 2008, if any person in the household is 18 years of age or older and has lived in another state in the preceding five years, the county social worker shall check the other state's child abuse and neglect registry to the extent required by federal law.

(d) (1) If the results of the California and federal criminal records check indicates that the person has no criminal record, the county social worker and court may consider the home of the relative, prospective guardian, or other person who is not a licensed or certified foster parent for placement of a child.

(2) If the criminal records check indicates that the person has been convicted of a crime that the Director of Social Services cannot grant an exemption for under Section 1522 of the Health and Safety Code, the child shall not be placed in the home. If the criminal records check indicates that the person has been convicted of a crime that the Director of Social Services may grant an exemption for under Section 1522 of the Health and Safety Code, the child shall not be placed in the home unless a criminal records exemption has been granted by the county, based on substantial and convincing evidence to support a reasonable belief that the person with the criminal conviction is of such good character as to justify the placement and not present a risk of harm to the child pursuant to paragraph (3).

(3) (A) A county may issue a criminal records exemption only if that county has been granted permission by the Director of Social Services to issue criminal records exemptions. The county may file a request with the Director of Social Services seeking permission for the county to establish a procedure to evaluate and grant appropriate individual criminal records exemptions for persons described in subdivision (b). The director shall grant or deny the county's request within 14 days of receipt. The county shall evaluate individual criminal records in accordance with the standards and

limitations set forth in paragraph (1) of subdivision (g) of Section 1522 of the Health and Safety Code, and in no event shall the county place a child in the home of a person who is ineligible for an exemption under that provision.

(B) The department shall monitor county implementation of the authority to grant an exemption under this paragraph to ensure that the county evaluates individual criminal records and allows or disallows placements according to the standards set forth in paragraph (1) of subdivision (g) of Section 1522 of the Health and Safety Code.

(4) The department shall conduct an evaluation of the implementation of paragraph (3) through random sampling of county exemption decisions.

(5) The State Department of Social Services shall not evaluate or grant criminal records exemption requests for persons described in subdivision (b), unless the exemption request is made by an Indian tribe pursuant to subdivision (f).

(6) If a county has not requested, or has not been granted, permission by the State Department of Social Services to establish a procedure to evaluate and grant criminal records exemptions, the county shall not place a child into the home of a person described in subdivision (b) if any person residing in the home has been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation, except as provided in subdivision (f).

(e) Nothing in this section shall preclude a county from conducting a criminal background check that the county is otherwise authorized to conduct using fingerprints.

(f) Upon request from an Indian tribe, the State Department of Social Services shall evaluate an exemption request, if needed, to allow placement into an Indian home that the tribe has designated for placement under the Indian Child Welfare Act (25 U.S.C. Sec. 1901 et seq.) that would otherwise be barred under this section. However, if the county with jurisdiction over the child that is the subject of the tribe's request has established an approved procedure pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (d), the tribe may request that the county evaluate the exemption request. Once a tribe has elected to have the exemption request reviewed by either the State Department of Social Services or the county, the exemption decision may only be made by that entity. Nothing in this subdivision limits the duty of a county social worker to evaluate the home for placement or to gather information needed to evaluate an exemption request.

SEC. 3. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

SEC. 4. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order to secure necessary federal funding for the care of children in California, it is necessary for this act to take effect immediately.